

HONORING WASHINGTON HEIGHTS'
DENISE DE LA NUECES

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ms. Denise De La Nueces, who last month graduated *summa cum laude* from Columbia University's undergraduate program.

A first generation daughter of Dominican immigrants, this remarkable young woman overcame numerous challenges, including poverty and a stuttering habit, to become the first Latina salutatorian in the College's 250-year history.

Born and raised in Washington Heights, Ms. De La Nueces attended the neighborhood parochial school of St. Rose of Lima before earning valedictorian honors at Cathedral High School. She entered Columbia in 1999 as one of the first recipients of The New York Times College Scholarship, a program founded to assist promising service-oriented students who have faced financial and other obstacles.

Although highly focused on excelling academically in biology, Ms. De La Nueces carefully balanced her studies with an equally strong commitment to her campus and neighborhood community. She was an active member of cultural organizations, working with students and alumni to develop and maintain the school's Latino mentoring program. She found time to step outside Columbia's walls to volunteer with Project HEALTH, a community-based program that works with physicians, educators, families and local leaders to design and implement curricula that empowers children to take control of their health.

She also found time to tutor at the Double Discovery Center (DDC), a Columbia-based educational nonprofit that works with students from low-income and historically disadvantaged backgrounds. A DDC alumnus herself, Ms. De La Nueces will spend the summer working there before getting her pediatrics career off to a good start at Harvard Medical School this fall.

Ms. De La Nueces' achievements are exceptional, but she is by no means a statistical fluke. Although far too many children of low-income and historically disadvantaged backgrounds are failing to reach their potential in our educational system, each May brings forth a new generation of graduates that under the radar of the media have broken barriers and shattered stereotypes to earn degrees. The challenge for these and other graduates is not only to blaze new paths with their individual success, but also to reach back to their alma maters and provide support within these difficult educational institutions.

In her remarks on graduation day, Ms. De La Nueces thanked her diverse group of mentors for providing this support. She also thanked them for helping her find a sense of community in the midst of so many differences. "In them, I have found the desire to improve the world community by looking beyond themselves," the Columbia Daily Spectator reported. "Let us strive to reach beyond ourselves, beyond the small spheres of our individual confines."

Ms. De La Nueces' experience is an example of how inclusion and diversity can provide opportunities not only for minority students to

excel, but also for all members of the student body to be enriched. An example of how leaders and mentors can be found and developed in all communities, if we are willing to invest in their search.

SSM HEALTH CARE IS FIRST
HEALTH CARE FIRM IN NATION
TO WIN MALCOLM BALDRIGE NA-
TIONAL QUALITY AWARD

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor SSM Health Care, the first health care organization in the country to be named a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner.

As a 2002 award recipient of the prestigious award, SSM was recently honored, along with two other recipients—Motorola, for manufacturing; and Branch-Smith Printing Division, for small business—during a ceremony in Alexandria, VA in May, 2003.

Named for the late Commerce Secretary in the Reagan Cabinet, the award is given by the U.S. Department of Commerce and as you know, is the top honor a U.S. company can receive for quality management and quality achievement in the categories of manufacturing, service, small business, education and health care.

Normally presented by the President of the United States, this year Vice President Dick CHENEY did the honors.

In a message from President George W. Bush, the Chief Executive said: "As we embrace new opportunities and face new challenges, these organizations are setting an example of quality and excellence that helps strengthen our Nation and points the way to a brighter, more prosperous future for all."

In his remarks, Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans noted that SSM, which is sponsored by the St. Louis-based Franciscan Sisters of Mary, is a role model of world-class excellence and has achieved extraordinary results.

"The men and women of this organization represent the highest ethical standards in public responsibility and corporate stewardship," Evans said. "I am particularly pleased to join the President in announcing a first-time winner for health care. The three 2002 Baldrige Award winners are role models of world-class excellence, and they have achieved extraordinary results."

Dick Davidson, President of The Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, also joined in praise of SSM.

"The clearest path to success for any organization is the one that embraces quality principles and the continuous improvement that they can unlock," Davidson said. "The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award highlights those organizations in business, health care and education that have followed this path and, in doing so, have set the standard for excellence in quality processes and results. The Foundation salutes the recipients of the 2002 Award and is pleased to continue its support of the Award."

Sister Mary Jean Ryan, President and CEO of SSM, and Sister Jacqueline Motzel, SSM Chairperson, received the award.

Sister Ryan said: "This Award is a wonderful recognition of the excellent performance of our employees and physicians and of their strong commitment to their mission—to reveal the healing presence of God through our exceptional health care services."

In competing for the award, SSM staff submitted a 50-page application and last October were subjected to comprehensive site visits at the corporate office and its facilities in four states. The visits took place at all hours of the day, and were meant to clarify and verify information included in the application.

Baldrige examiners spoke with more than 800 employees and physicians, systemwide, and measured performance in seven areas: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resources focus, process management and business results.

An example of the SSM success model is its employees. Comprised of a workforce of 82 percent women employees, among the hospitals many achievements has been to reduce employee turnover from a rate of 21 percent in 1999 to 13 percent in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially proud of SSM Health Care for receiving this honor. A not-for-profit Catholic health care system, it provides primary, secondary and tertiary health care services by way of 21 acute care hospitals and three nursing homes in four states—Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin and Oklahoma—which it owns or manages.

Nearly 5000 affiliated physicians and 22,200 employees work together to provide a wide range of services, including: inpatient, outpatient, emergency, ambulatory, physician practices, residential and skilled nursing.

The Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was created to provide the private sector a means of accomplishing better employee relations, higher productivity, greater customer satisfaction, increased market share and improved operating performance.

As a recipient of this most prestigious award, SSM Health Care joins the company of other winners, including: Boeing Airlift and Tanker Programs, Merrill Lynch Credit Corp., Xerox Business Services, AT&T Consumer Communications Services, Eastman Chemical Co., the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Express Corp., Cadillac Motor Car Division, Motorola Inc., and Westinghouse Electric Corp.

In addition to winning a Baldrige Award, SSM Health Care is also the 2003 Missouri Industry of the Year, in the large company classification. That award, sponsored by the Associated Industries of Missouri and the Mid-Missouri Business Journal, annually recognizes the best and brightest Missouri businesses that are working to make Missouri a better place to live and work.

Also, SSM Health Care was a Missouri Quality Award recipient in 1999.

Through a series of 2003 Baldrige Sharing Dates—June 18, August 20, October 23 and December 18—the SSM staff is sharing its winning techniques with other executives from all industries to learn first-hand from the top SSM leaders. I urge any organization on a quest for success to consider looking at the SSM Health Care model. It has proven its success, not only to its patients, its staff and St. Louis, but also to the nation.

In an April 9 column by Washington Post reporter David S. Broder noted SSM's success,